GRATITUDE Devotional



Gratitude Devotional

Hey Friends. Happy November! What an exciting time of year, full of celebrations and gatherings! What I look forward to at this time of year are all of the opportunities to make great memories with friends and family. Our calendars are packed with activities and festivities, and all of that brings tons of fun!

With that being said, it can also bring unwanted stress. This time of year intended to focus on gratitude slowly turns into worry. Worrying about all the shopping, baking, decorating, and hosting.

A few years ago I decided I would not let any of the long list of "todo's" rob our family of the joy of the upcoming season. The Lord instructs us to rejoice and be glad! Approach our days with a grateful heart. Let's shift our focus to seek His blessings each day. Even the blessings that seem small, once we start focusing on those, start adding up. Purposely focusing on this each day will send us into the Advent Season with ready hearts anticipating our coming Lord.

I'm excited to share this Gratitude Devotional (a Journey for your family to take together) and season with each of you, my precious church family. It is my prayer that you and your families will grow in fellowship and with hearts of praises to our Lord. May our hearts be – filled with gratitude and thanksgiving as we approach advent season with ready hearts - anticipating our coming Lord.

With a grateful heart!

Mrs. Shannon Director of Children's Ministries

In this devotional you will find:

--a prayer of thanksgiving for each week. I would encourage you to have fun memorizing these verses as a family.

--a Bible verse for the week.

--a family activity. This helps you enjoy some family time while focusing on gratitude and thanksgiving. Have fun with these as you feel led. If the Lord places another idea on your heart, that's great! I'd love to hear about it!

--a gratitude prompt for each day. Feel free to use this prompt for discussion with your family. Children may enjoy coloring a picture in their pumpkin journals or writing about what they are thankful for each day.

Remember, this is simply a guide. If the Lord—and you—come up with another idea, go with it. You and your family will enjoy your journey even more.

Week 1

Prayer of Thanksgiving: Psalm 100 " A Psalm for giving thanks"

^{*p}Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!*</sup>

² ^qServe the LORD with gladness!^rCome into his presence with singing!

³ Know that ^sthe LORD, he is God!
It is he who ^tmade us, and ^uwe are his;¹
we are his ^vpeople, and ^wthe sheep of his pasture.

⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his ^ycourts with praise!
 Give thanks to him; ²bless his name!

⁵ ^{*a*}For the LORD is good;

⁶his steadfast love endures forever, and his ^bfaithfulness to all generations.

Bible Verse of the week:

"Enter his gates with Thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise his name." Psalm 100:4

Family Activity: Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

Get outdoors! Take the family for a morning walk or afternoon stroll. You could do this several times during this journey, if you wish. Make sure everyone takes their time. Stop and look at things you are thankful for—the trees, the smell of the rain, friendly neighbors. Thank God for these as you walk together.

If you wish to use it, I have included a list of suggestions for your hunt. And you might take pictures of those things for which you are thankful. It's a great way to remember this time together!

GRATITUDE PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Something I'm Grateful For . . .

1.) In Color
2.) In Nature
3.) In the City
4.) At the Park
5.) That is Soft
6.) That is Hard
7.) In My Closet
8.) With Texture
9.) In My Kitchen
10	.) In the Weather
1	.) In Black in White
	.) In The Workforce
	.) With Words on It
14	.) That Entertains Me
1.5	.) That is Unique to Me
10	.) In the Retail Industry
17	.) In My Neighborhood
18	.) That Keeps Me Warm
19	.) That Makes Me Laugh
20	.) In Regards to the Holidays
22	.) In the Month of November
	.) That Makes My Life Easier
23	.) That Make My Belly Happy
24	.) That Reminds Me of Friends
	.) That is Indicative of My City
20	i.) That Represents My Country
	.) In My Fall/Thanksgiving Décor
	.) That Gets My From Here to There
25	.) That Keeps Me Healthy and Stron

30.) The final photo challenge is to take a photo of how you intend to spread the Thankful Spirit.

Week 1 Gratitude Daily Prompts

Each day record as a family your response to the gratitude prompt. Children may write or draw their response.

Sunday: Something outside I'm thankful for

Monday: Something inside I'm thankful for

Tuesday: An event I'm thankful for

Wednesday: A time you were grateful for playing with someone

Thursday: Something fun I'm thankful for

Friday: A pet you are grateful for

Saturday: A toy I am grateful for

Week 2

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

For the Beauty of the Earth (ACNA Website Occasional Prayers; pg 22)

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the wonder of your creatures, large and small; and for all the loveliness that surrounds us. We praise you for these good gifts, and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your Name, now and for ever. *Amen*.

Bible verse of the week: "Giving thanks always and for everything to God the father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20

Family activity: Gratitude Letters

Sit down as a family and write letters and/or draw pictures for people you wish to thank for their part in your life together. Perhaps you want to thank teachers at your schools, or first responders (police, fire, EMTs), hospital staff, local food banks, clergy and staff at area churches. Schedule a time as a family to deliver these thank-you notes. If you feel you don't have time to hand-deliver them, that's okay! People love happy mail, especially at this time of year.

Week 2 Daily Gratitude prompts:

Sunday: A time you are grateful you were able to help someone else

Monday: What is something unique about your family that you are grateful for?

Tuesday: Talk about the work and people who worked hard to build the home that you live in.

Wednesday: Community helpers and/or workers you are thankful for

Thursday: What was the best part of your day today?

Friday: What are 3 ways to say, "thank you" without saying, "thank you"?

Saturday: Which one of your 5 senses are you most grateful for?

Week 3

Prayer of Thanksgivings: (ACNA website, occasional prayers pg 115)

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. *Amen.*

Week 3 (cont'd)

Bible verse of the week: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever." Psalm 107:1

Family Activity: Turn on some music and everyone head to the kitchen! It's a great day to prepare a batch of 'no-bake' blessing mix. You can share it with friends and neighbors—orto give to family and guests you will see during the Thanksgiving holidays.

Bugles represent the cornucopia, a horn of plenty. Pretzels represent arms folded in thanks and prayer. andy corn reminds us that during the first winter, the

blessing mix

Pilgrims were allowed only a few kernels of corn per day because food was so scarce. Seeds are promise of a future harvest if they are planted and well tended.

Fruit is a reminder of the harvest gifts from the land. <u>Mans</u> are for Memories of those who came before us. <u>Hershey's Kiss</u> is a reminder of the love of family and friends that sweetens our lives.

Week 3 Gratitude Daily Prompts:

Sunday: Which season of the year are you most thankful for?

Monday: What is your favorite park?

Tuesday: What technology are you grateful for?

Wednesday: Pause and think of 5 things you are grateful for in this moment

Thursday: (THANKSGIVING DAY) Look around at your family and friends today. Take time to thank God for them and think of why you are so grateful for each of them.

Friday: What is the food you are most grateful for?

Saturday: What is the activity you enjoy doing with your family the most and why?

Week 4

Prayer of Thanksgiving: (ACNA Website Occasional Prayers; pg 21; prayer 86)

For the Diversity of Races and Cultures

O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you

for the diversity of races and cultures in this world. Show us your presence in those who differ from us, and enrich our lives with their fellowship, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

Bible Verse of the week: "Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks." 1 Timothy 4:4

Family Activity: "Giving Day"

Here we are! The final week of November. We have enjoyed approaching our days with gratitude and focusing on the many blessings surrounding us. Now, let's look for ways God may want to use these blessings to serve others. A way for us to show our gratitude by giving. Serving together as a family is a beautiful thing and can be done with all ages. Take some time this week to sit and talk about opportunities you see around you or areas where the Lord may be speaking to you to offer a hand and/or serve. Pray for His guidance on this. You may want to sit as a family and research organizations in need. Set aside some time to serve as a family in the coming weeks, maybe even just an hour. Let's call it a "giving day" or "giving hour".

Some suggestions if you are struggling to find a place:

 St. Paul's food distribution always needs many extra hands to prep and hand out food to the folks who come to our doors.

- Lowcountry pregnancy center collects diapers, wipes, and baby blankets during the holiday season. Each mother who visits the center is given a blanket that has bee prayed over.
 - Ronald McDonald House takes can tabs as well as always needing assistance feeding the families they are hosting. Not able to make the drive, shop on Amazon and take a look at their wish-list or go shopping as a family and deliver.
- Grab an Operation Christmas Child box and fill it with goodies to bless another child this Christmas.

Week 4 Gratitude Prompts:

Sunday: What are 3 things you are thankful for about yourself?

Monday: Make silly faces with your family and be grateful for the gift of silliness and laughter!

Tuesday: Talk about what it means to be safe and cozy

Wednesday: If you had to give up all of your possessions what 3 things would you keep?

Thursday: Who is someone you have a hard time getting along with? Think of at least 3 positive things to say about that person.

Friday: Talk about the people who work to bring food to your home. Take some time to thank God for the many hands he

provides in getting food to our tables. (farmers, delivery drivers, grocery store employees, our parents shopping, etc.)

Saturday: What is an activity or talent you have or enjoy doing that you are thankful for the ability to glorify God through this talent or activity?

Children's Books about Gratitude & Thanksgiving

The Berenstain Bears Count Their Blessings Bear Says Thanks Gratitude Soup Thankful The Blessings Jar

. Saturday, December 1st

- Discuss as a family what you enjoyed with this Gratitude devotional.
- 2. What ways did you grow as your focused shifted to being thankful?
- 3. What was your favorite family activity?
- 4. What prayer expressed the words on your heart?

Congratulations! What a fun month walking in gratitude as a family. I pray that your hearts grew in love for our Lord Jesus, each other, as well as those around us in our neighborhoods, schools, and communities. May we keep this posture of thankful hearts as we proceed into the advent season.

Love and Peace,

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